

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) issued the following statement on a report issued yesterday on Republican immigration field hearings held over the summer:

As House Republicans gathered today to report on the summer field hearings, Members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC) once again called for real and comprehensive immigration reform.

“Beyond the breathtaking waste of time and public dollars to hold hearings after legislation has already been passed by both houses, House Republicans still refuse to face many of the larger problems in our immigration system, problems that most affect Asian Pacific Americans,” said Rep. Mike Honda, Chair of the CAPAC.

The House version of the immigration bill focuses only on closing off U.S. borders to illegal immigrants, and refuses to deal with any guest worker programs for the estimated 10-12 million illegal immigrants already in the country. Additionally, the hearings never examined backlogs in the family immigration system and the impact of such backlogs on U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents and their families. For example, applicants from Asian countries suffer some of the longest immigration backlogs:

- \* A U.S. citizen petitioning for an unmarried adult child from the Philippines must wait approximately 14 years before the son or daughter can immigrate to the U.S.

- \* A U.S. citizen petitioning for a brother or sister from India must wait about 12 years.

- \* For a brother or sister from the Philippines, the wait is about 22 years.

“Senate Republicans and Democrats are trying to work together to pass a measure that deals with the whole situation, not just one part of it,” said Rep. Neil Abercrombie, Chair of the CAPAC Immigration Task Force. “Congress needs to design an engine to drive a realistic national immigration policy, but House Republicans just want to play with the tailpipe because it makes the most noise.”

“We can’t fix all the problems in our immigration system by just building fences,” said Rep. Honda. “Comprehensive reform must encompass border security, family reunification, the immigration backlog, employer accountability for labor exploitation, and a path to legalized status and citizenship, including tough requirements for learning English, paying fines and back taxes, and proving gainful employment.”

“We need an immigration system that protects our homeland, respects this country’s proud history of welcoming people who seek a better life, and honors the contributions that immigrants have made to our work force, to our communities and to our nation,” Abercrombie said.

